

## Jesus Wow! Series Part 15

### Jesus the Stronger Man

Mark 3:20-35

Pastor Mark Wallace 19/7/20

#### Sermon Summary

In the 1858 midterm US elections, Abraham Lincoln (not then President) gave a speech that elevated him to national prominence. During this particular speech on slavery, he chose to use the phrase: **“A house divided against itself cannot stand.”** He was quoting a famous phrase that probably everyone of that era knew and understood, for its origin belongs to Jesus and is recorded in today’s text: Mark 3:24-25.

Jesus uttered those words almost 2000 years ago, and, as with all of his sayings, what was pertinent then is just as pertinent today. Jesus goes on to say that the success of robbing a strong man’s house is to first securely bind the strong man. This is another teaching of Jesus where the object is to show that **He** is the **true** strong man, that He is the divine **Messiah**.

**1.What is our rejection? (Verses 20-27).** Once again, Jesus is here overwhelmed by crowds to such an extent that He and his disciples cannot even pause for a lunch break. This makes his family upset and they think Jesus is “out of his mind” and that he might become an embarrassment to the family name. Jesus said in a related passage in Matthew, **“Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. Whoever does not take up his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake, will find it” (Matthew 10:37-39).** Jesus is describing a servanthood that many in his day and in ours reject.

**2.How much does Christ save? (Verses 28-30).** Frequently Jesus’ reply to the Pharisees’ accusations begins with the words: “Have you not read.” For he is, by this method, questioning their very intellect. They are supposed to know, not only the scriptures, but the full meaning of them. Here Jesus says, “Truly I tell you, people can be forgiven all their sins and every slander they utter...” The Greek word for all our sin is *Panta Hamartemata* which really means all our sin lumped together, as a whole, all at one time.

But now, at the conclusion of his explanation of the Pharisees’ illogical thinking behind their accusation of His being possessed by a senior demon, Jesus goes on to make a fundamental statement about blasphemy: “But whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; they are guilty of an eternal sin.” The person who states that Jesus is an evil spirit (i.e. Jesus’ work is of demonic origin) is blaspheming against the Holy Spirit. **There is no forgiveness for such a sin.**

Why does blasphemy of the Holy Spirit have to be so severe? Because it strikes at the absolute sovereignty of God in His handling of sin. If you are worried that some of the things you may do or say (past or present) that could be blasphemous to the Holy Spirit's work, then you are **NOT** doomed! You are simply sensitive to the work of the Holy Spirit. And that's a good thing!

In the earlier part of the story, the strong man of the house is Satan. He must be bound and defeated before we can be released from our bondage. Jesus is the only one stronger than Satan. Satan has many ways to weaken us; attacking the family of righteous people is one very common way. Satan goes for the weakest link in a Christian, and it may not be within that Christian but within his or her family.

The greater the responsibility for you as a Christian, the more important it is to become a servant of those for whom you are a leader. Without the love of Jesus within you, you are not going to achieve servanthood. How and why do you push away from attaining the Jesus model of servanthood?

**How do you identify Jesus?** As a mad-man, a bad-man, or the God-man? Jesus was either a lunatic, a liar, or Lord? No one can be a bystander on this question. A Christian **cannot** say that Jesus is **NOT** God. We cannot say that He was a great teacher, a great moralist, even a great human. That's a cop-out; that's agreeing with the world's view.

**3. Who are Christ's? (Verse 31-35).** At this point in the narrative, it appears Jesus is disowning his family, even his mother. His love for his family is strong. Remember, He specifically refers to his mother in one of the last sentences He utters on the cross. But Jesus expands that familial love to encompass a greater understanding of what it means to be family: **"Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother" (Mark 3:35).**

Abraham Lincoln said: "A house divided against itself cannot stand." He added: "I believe this government cannot endure, permanently half *slave* and half *free*". How can any institution or individual live divided against itself, half slave and half free? This applies to the church and to us as Christians. It should be a challenge to us all.

## Discussion Questions

### Read Mark 3:20-27.

1. Why did Jesus' family want to pull him away and take him home? Does this tell us something about typical family dynamics?
2. What is the illogic that Jesus points out to the teachers of the law claiming Jesus is being driven by Beelzebub? Does this tell us anything about religious in-fighting?
3. How does the phrase, "A house divided against itself cannot stand" apply to church congregations? Can you think of examples you have experienced?
4. How and why do we push away from attaining the Jesus' model of servanthood?

### Read Mark 3:28-30.

5. Why is it important to realize the full application of Jesus' words, "Truly I tell you, people can be forgiven all their sins and every slander they utter"?
6. Jesus did add, "But whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; they are guilty of an eternal sin." What do you understand by the unpardonable sin?

### Read Mark 3:31-35.

7. Who does Jesus recognize as his brothers and sisters, and why is this important to our understanding of our Christianity?
8. Abraham Lincoln said: "A house divided against itself cannot stand." He added: "I believe this government cannot endure, permanently half *slave* and half *free*". How does this apply to the church and to us as Christians?

## Prayer Points for the Group

Global: for the children during the Covid-19 crisis. For the 1.2 million children trafficked each year, 108 million orphaned children, 300,000 child soldiers currently serving in armies. For God's mercy and provision and for the gospel to reach them.

For our government and the political landscape.

For the elderly and frail in our congregation: for connection, care, sense of purpose, abiding faith, closeness to God, hope....